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ABSTRACT

The benefits of using part-time professional faculty are addressed, based on Pratt Institute's strategy for achieving academic excellence. A profile of the institute identifies its mission as essentially professional: it educates, among others, architects, engineers, librarians, and nutritionists. Since there is a need to get professional information directly into the curriculum, Pratt Institute employs large numbers of part-time faculty who are practicing professionals. A core liberal arts program ensures that ethical, humanistic, social, and historical values become an integral part of the professional education. By using full-time professionals who are part-time academics, professional norms and values are introduced into the curriculum, and students' transition into the world of work is eased. A long- time relationship with the institute is encouraged by the union contract for part-time faculty, which extends, on a prorated basis, many of the benefits associated with membership in the faculty. Advice is offered about what should and should not be done when deciding whether to use part-time faculty at a school. (SW)

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BOUNDARY-SPANNING PROFESSIONALS: VALUE-ADDING ROLES FOR PART-TIME FACULTY

Pratt Institute's Strategy To Enhance Its Curriculum

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A Profile of Pratt Institute

Educating professionals for productive careers in artistic and technical fields has been the mission of Pratt Institute ever since it assembled its first coeducational student body 99 years ago. While the characteristics and educational requirements of the professions for which Pratt prepares people have changed over nearly a century, the Institute has succeeded in pursuing its abiding purpose: to blend theoretical learning with professional and humanistic development. This has been achieved with structured yet flexible curricula that prepare students for constantly changing and ever broadening careers in fine arts, design, architecture, engineering and the sciences.

Founded in 1887 by Charles Pratt, an industrialist and philanthropist, the Institute still occupies its original site in the Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn. For most of the first half-century of its existence, the Institute educated on the non-baccalaureate or certificate rather than on the baccalaureate level. It granted its first baccalaureate degree in 1938, and its first graduate degree program in Library Science was started in 1950. Today, Pratt is primarily an undergraduate and graduate degree-granting institution with only an advanced certificate in Library Science and an associate degree program at Pratt/Manhattan deviating from the pattern.

Current enrollment (Fall 1985) is 3,672 students -- 2,811 of which are undergraduates and 861 graduate students. They are enrolled in five schools, the largest of which is the School of Art and Design with 1,890 students. The next largest is the School of Architecture which has 829 students. This is followed by the School of Engineering with 618, the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences with 165, and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science with 121 students. The Pratt/Manhattan associate degree program with 45 students completes the total. In addition, the Continuing Education division enrolled 1,808 in a variety of courses last year.[2]

Pratt prepares its students for a wide range of careers in design and fine arts, architecture and planning, computer science, engineering, nutrition and dietetics, data systems management and information science. Its students are distinguished by their diversity. Most of them, unlike the typical American college student, have career objectives before they choose Pratt, are committed to prepare for these or related careers, and are older than the average student in a liberal arts college. About 57 percent transfer to Pratt from other colleges after they have settled on career objectives and, through study or work, have tested their fitness for the professional careers they have chosen to pursue.

Pratt's success in attracting talented and motivated students and in developing their potential can be seen in the large number of its 30,000 alumni who hold key positions

throughout the world in the fine arts, design, architecture, computer science, engineering science and management.

A notable number of Pratt's alumni have won Fulbright, Guggenheim or Tiffany Fellowships, Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize as well as various other awards from professional societies and groups. They have designed many of the objects, furniture, clothes, houses and offices which are so much a part of our daily lives. They also help society with the food that is consumed, the information needed and the art we enjoy.

In educating more than four generations of students to be creative, technically skilled and adaptable professionals, as well as responsible citizens, Pratt has gained a national and international reputation that currently attracts undergraduate and graduate students from 43 states and the District of Columbia and more than 65 foreign countries.[2]

The Strategy for Achieving Academic Excellence

Pratt Institute's strategy for achieving academic excellence is based on a faculty that combines part-time professionals with its core of full-time faculty. The nature of the educational process at Pratt demands the successful integration of the two. Pratt believes part-time facuty are an important and powerful resource in achieving academic excellence and in meshing the world of education with the world of professional work.

The faculty of the Institute is one of its major strengths. Because Pratt is located in the metropolitan New York area, Pratt is able to draw on a wonderful pool of talented, experienced professionals. This enables the Institute to have extraordinary diversity within almost every program or school. These 121 full-time and 350 part-time faculty have an international background, a multi-cultural outlook and a list of professional accomplishments that is outstanding for a college of its size. Many of them are currently engaged as distinguished practitioners of the subjects they teach and they bring this direct knowledge to their classes. They have won many awards, including Fulbright, Tiffany, Guggenheim, and others of comparable renown.

As indicated previously, Pratt is essentially professional in its educational mission. It educates, among others, architects, engineers, librarians, and nutritionists, whose occupations require either formal licensure or certification. While artists, designers and computer specialists do not generally have formal professional stature, they consider themselves professionals.

Because of this, there is a need to get professional information directly into the curriculum. Professionals insist on training those seeking entry into the profession. Thus, the Institute employs large numbers of part-time faculty who are (for the most part) professionals. This is similar to other professions where doctors teach in medical school, lawyers in law school, etc. This is a symbiotic relationship in which the product or educational output of the academic institution is

shaped by professionals teaching within the academic world. If the academic institution is to maintain its role in the education of professionals then it must maintain both relevance to, and understanding of, the needs of the profession. By retaining large numbers of practicing professionals on a part-time basis, the schools, particularly the School of Art & Design and the School of Architecture, ensure that students receive current information about the art, design, engineering, computer, library, nutrition and architecture professions.

The schools at Pratt are relatively autonomous in direct relation to their specific professional outlook. The faculties and curricula of the various professional schools are generally discrete but they do share a core of common Liberal Arts. This core program serves to ensure that common ethical, humanistic, social and historical values become an integral part of the professional education. Professionally, the faculty members of the individual schools tend to go their separate ways, but share a concern for professional excellence and a commitment to an educational philosophy which connects education toward productive participation in society through the various professions. Since much of a professional curriculum is determined by the needs of professions, it is apparent that large numbers of practicing professionals teaching are desirable in a place like Pratt. A distinction is thus made between those faculty who are essentially full-time academics and those who are essentially full-time professionals/ part-time academics. These latter

academics -- full-time professionals/ part-time academics -- would thus be boundary-spanning individuals between the institution and the professions. In this role the professional norms and values would be introduced into Pratt's curriculum.

In the Spring of 1971, the faculty of Pratt voted to authorize a local of the United Federation of College Teachers, Local 1460, American Federation of Teachers. In the Fall of 1972, the administration and the Union signed the first contract. This was one of the first contracts negotiated after the National Labor Relations Board decision of 1970 in the Cornell Case, also known as the "Million Dollar Rule". The contract negotiated covered all faculty, both full-time and part-time and has continued in effect, with only minimum modifications to the present.[4]

Large numbers of part-time faculty have long-term relationships with the Institute. According to figures developed for the last National Association of Schools of Art and Design Self-Study, 24% or 61 of 249 of the part-time faculty had been at Pratt for ten years or more, and 24% or 59 of 249, for five to nine years.[3] Thus a large percentage of the part-time faculty appear to have a long-term, permanent relationship with the institution. In short, the part-time faculty member at Pratt should generally be recognized as an integral faculty member who has a continuing involvement and commitment to the Institute. This involvement and commitment is however defined and limited by the Union Contract. Those aspects of the Contract that encourage

interaction beyond the formally defined teaching load are Articles 21.2 and 21.3, which provide for a Certificate of Continuous Employment (CCE), a form of contract security for part-timers, and opportunities for promotion in rank.

Adjunct faculty are eligible for promotional opportunities in the following ranks: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. These are the same as for full-time faculty. Their work load is limited to a maximum of three-quarters that of a full-time load and seniority within areas of competence governs the assignment of classes. It also governs possible lay-offs due to under-enrollment of classes.

Tenure at Pratt Institute is defined in the contract at Article 27.2 as "the right of a person to hold his or her position until retirement during efficient and competent service, and shall not be removed except for cause."[4] It is granted to full-time faculty after they have served for seven probationary years and are recommended and approved by the academic administration, including the Board of Trustees. Part-time adjunct faculty members are eligible for a Certificate of Continuous Employment after having completed 10 semesters. These faculty are subject to the same rigorous evaluation procedures when they apply for the CCE as are full-time faculty when they apply for tenure. This includes peer, Chairperson and Dean reviews with final approval given by the Board of Trustees. However, unlike the tenure process for full-time faculty, those adjunct faculty are not subject to "tenure or out." Adjunct faculty denied a CCE may continue to teach.

The other part-time faculty category is that of the visiting faculty defined in Article 21.5. This is open "to individuals who are distinguished practitioners or specialists."[4] They may teach a maximum of one-half the full-time load and they are not eligible for a CCE. Compensation parallels equivalent adjunct ranks. Visiting faculty are also eligible for promotion in rank.

There is also the ability for part-time faculty to change status. That is, for a visiting faculty member to become adjunct, but that decision is an administrative one.

In short, the contract encourages part-time faculty to have long term relationships with Pratt. This is as it should be, since they are important to Pratt.

The value and the value-adding roles of professionals who are part-time faculty are most apparent when it is understood that they are a primary source by which appropriate norms, values and information are inserted directly into the curriculum. In their boundary-spanning role they are able to do this, and as a result, enhance the curriculum and improve the students' education. By doing this, the students' transition into the world of work is eased and students are more fully prepared for that world. Katz and Kahn would also point out that this "negentropy" in the form of boundary-spanning professionals keeps the academic organization vital by bringing in new energy.[1]

With the above in mind it is clear why part-time faculty are so important to the academic welfare of Pratt Institute.

Some helpful hints and key questions should help others in deciding whether the use of part-time faculty is appropriate for their school.

When using part-time faculty, be deliberate about it and be prepared to answer the following questions before seeking part-time faculty:

- What do you want to achieve with Part-Time Faculty? (What will be added to the curriculum?)

- Which departments (or subjects) are most appropriate for part-time professionals? (Not all are suitable.)

- Does the use of Part-Time Faculty conflict with accreditation? (Some agencies have strict guidelines.)

- Where can you find suitable part-time professional faculty? (Or can you find them?)

Do's	Don'ts
Do:	Don't:
Consider Part-Time Faculty integral to the department -- a valuable resource -- include them in the academic decision-making/ policy development, as appropriate.	Think of Part-Time Faculty as cheap substitutes for regular faculty or treat them as simple expedients to achieve budgetary economies.
Give them an orientation to the school and department and make sure they understand how their class(es) fit into the curriculum.	Assume they immediately understand the goals of the college, their department, or their role.
Draw on their strengths -- use them appropriately to teach classes where they draw on their professional background.	Have Part-Time Faculty only teach the classes that none of the regular faculty want.

Pay Part-Time Faculty appropriately for their experience and expertise, which may be considerable.

Be prepared to pay Part-Time faculty for their entire commitment (if it includes more than just teaching a class).

Devise incentives for Part-Time Faculty to continue with the department (such as promotions in rank, incremental salary increases, etc.)

Evaluate Part-Time Faculty on the same basis as for Full-Time Faculty.

Consider Part-Time Faculty as being a positive aspect of the department and publicly define their role.

Use Part-Time Faculty in a conscious, planned way that is understood by all.

Understand that Part-Time Faculty may assist students in gaining employment and offer a boundary-spanning perspective.

Underestimate the value of professional experience (in lieu of a terminal academic degree).

Have Part-Time Faculty teach inappropriate classes that don't directly draw on their experience and background.

Expect Part-Time Faculty to assist with student advisement or serve on committees without some sort of compensation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be stressed that if the part-time faculty are selected, hired and academically placed for maximum institutional and professional enhancement, everyone will benefit. However, if part-time faculty are hired merely (or

mainly) as cheap substitutes for full-time faculty, then all will suffer accordingly. Part-time professional faculty must be viewed as an integral part of the academic community and should benefit from their association with the college or university. This means extending to them, on a pro-rated basis, many of the benefits associated with membership in the faculty. The institution that fails in this regard will suffer in its educational programs and the individual will suffer low morale from improper or unappreciated use of his or her talents.

The benefits of using part-time professional faculty have been outlined in this paper and, for Pratt Institute, are clearly a key component in its strategy for achieving academic excellence.

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